

PETER STONE BROWN

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Liner notes sort of.....

Andrew,

Country duets were sort of phenomenon in the very late '60s, early '70s, with the pairings of George Jones, Dolly & Porter and Conway & Loretta. I'm not sure who came first, though I think it was Porter & Dolly, though of course as this collection shows Loretta Lynn & Ernest Tubb did it way before that.

You will notice that all three did a lot of the same songs, and since they all did them so well, I included all versions.

These two tapes pretty much represent the best of what I have, and it's pretty much all I have.

Tape one starts off with George & Tammy's first album, *We Go Together* and as I listened I ended up putting on the entire album. This was easily their greatest work together. I had at one point just about everything they did, but I think I sold some stuff somewhere along the line. The other albums never lived up to the potential of this one. This album is everything through "After Closing Time."

The next few songs are from their third album *Let's Build A World Together*, which I also liked a lot, and "Golden Ring" and "The Ceremony" (from their 2nd album, *Me & The First Lady*) were from their *Greatest Hits* which I kept.

These songs to be represent the best in Nashville honky-tonk songwriting of that period where the hookline was all. "Take Me" was an early George Jones hit which he wrote the with great songwriter Leon Payne. I also have George's solo version which of course is also phenomenal. I considered putting it on, but it would've taken me off-track of the duets thing and gotten into a whole other area.

The George & Tammy tracks were all produced by Billy Sherrill, who as Tom Wolfe once wrote, "invented Tammy Wynette." Sherrill used the pedal steel for maximum emotional effect, and many of these songs have what was known as "The Billy Sherrill bridge" which was a trademark of every Wynette hit, and which he applied to man of his Jones and Charlie Rich productions as well.

We then move to a few tracks from Conway & Loretta's first duet album, *We Only Make Believe*. I have this album and their third album *Louisiana Woman-Mississippi Man*. As with George & Tammy, their first was their best. They made a couple of more. On these you will notice an immediate sense of how much fun Conway & Loretta had singing together. They definitely brought something out in each other. And, of course, Conway, like Jerry Lee never stopped rocking. (By the way Jerry Lee also made a duet albums with his sister, Linda Gail Lewis, but I don't have those records, though I may have one or two tracks on a Jerry Lee anthology.) To me, Conway was an amazing country singer (like Jerry Lee) and of course he sold an astounding amount of records (one to the all-time top sellers if not *the* top seller) to prove it. A lot of the modern-day critic assholes put him down (when he was alive) but they just didn't get it as usual. Just dig what he does on the bridge of "Take Me," how he stretches out the word into this purely sexual grunt/groan. Amazing! Everything through "Working Girl" is from their first album and the remaining tracks from their third. Dig Loretta on "You Lay So

Easy On My Mind,” what harmony! And then the sad pain in her voice on “As Good As A Lonely Girl Can Be.” It doesn’t get better than this.

The Loretta/Ernie Tubb tracks speak for themselves, and on “Sweet Thang,” again a sense of pure fun is in evidence. These are from an old Decca album called *Singin’ Again*.

We then move to the most successful of country duos, Porter Wagoner & Dolly Parton. Most of these tracks are from *The Best of Porter & Dolly* on RCA Victor. As you may or may not know, Porter (still on the O’pry) had a regular TV show for years and discovered Dolly. He had the first hit of “Satisfied Mind,” and was at one time a *huge* star. If you’re ever in a used record store that has a good country section, check out his album covers. They were classics, as he usually acted out the part of whatever the hit song of the album was, like being a bum on his album *Skid Row Joe*. These effortless tracks again speak for themselves, and you will notice as you listen that most of them have very hot bluegrass flavored acoustic guitar picking wildly in the mix.

Dolly, despite her flaky image may well be the greatest woman country singer of all time, as well as one of its greatest songwriters. I suggest you check out the recently reissued and remastered *Coat of Many Colors* album which came out about a year ago on Buddah. She was an absolutely brilliant songwriter and I was terribly disappointed when she went pop, (though she now has returned to country). She of course since has made two albums with Emmylou and Ronstadt which aren’t bad, but the person she should’ve made duet albums with (and there’s always a chance it can still happen) was Haggard, who I believe was in love with her. Did you ever see the TV movie she made with Asleep At The Wheel co-starring Ray Benson? It was really stupid but kind of fun. A very cheap production too. I was in Austin when

they were filming it. They actually used The Wheel's bus in it, and cheaply covered up the Asleep At The Wheel sign on the side instead of painting over it. You can see the cover blowing in the wind. I suspect that she and Ray had a little action going on.

We then move ahead to the 1991 for George Jone's MCA period and *The Bradley Barn Sessions*. As you may know, Bradley's Barn was *the* legendary studio in Nashville, and this album was an attempt (that failed) to introduce Jones to a new audience by that '90s thing of having great musicians record with a bunch of stars (John Lee Hooker is the biggest victim of this tactic). Anyway, "Where Grass Won't Grow," is an incredible song Jones recorded solo way back in the '60s for Musicor, and this version, while not as great as the original ain't bad at all.

I knew you *had* to have the Keith Richards track, "Say It's Not You." The song was written by one of Keith's favorite writers Dallas Frazier, who wrote an astounding number of amazing country songs and R&B ones too. I have his two albums which are well worth hearing. Frazier came out of the Bakersfield scene along with Buck Owens and Haggard, but his first album *Elvira* is as much greasy roadside R&B as it is country, and in addition to the hit for the Argyles, "Alley Oop," contains a lot of songs that were hits for Charlie Rich such as "Mohair Sam." This album also contained a remake of George & Tammy's hit, "Golden Ring," (with Tammy), but I felt the original which I put on the first tape was superior.

We then take a step back in time to the one track I have of George & Melba Montgomery which was way before Tammy, before moving ahead to "male duets," mainly George Jones and Merle Haggard who made one album, and then the Merle & Willie album. Willie of course made several duet albums with other artists that unfortunately I don't have (yet) such as Ray Price and

Roger Miller (Willie was in both of their bands, and Miller started out playing fiddle in Price's band).

Finally I conclude with The Everly Brothers original recording of "So Sad" which of course is on the Prine album, and since it happens to be one of my all-time favorite Everly songs (which I do myself every now and then), I felt you should have the original.

Most of this tape was made from vinyl, and I'm pretty sure very little of this stuff has been reissued on CD. I couldn't help but notice that the MCA/Decca stuff was deficient in sound quality. (There used to be a record store joke: What's the difference between MCA and the Titanic? The Titanic had a good band.)

Anyway I hope these tapes bring you the same enjoyment I had in making them.